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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 003399

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF, EUR/ERA, EUR/WE

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [MASS](#) [XY](#) [IT](#) [UNSC](#)

SUBJECT: LIBERIA/ECOWAS MISSION: ITALY SUPPORTIVE,  
CIRCULATING APPEAL FOR EU FINANCING

REF: A. STATE 213493

[1](#)B. BRUSSELS 3711

CLASSIFIED BY: A/POL MINISTER-COUNSELOR GARY ROBBINS FOR REASONS 1.5(B)  
AND (C)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY. MFA DIRECTOR-GENERAL FOR SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA CABRAS SAID ITALY BACKS OUR CALL FOR EU SUPPORT OF AN ECOWAS MISSION IN LIBERIA, AND IS CIRCULATING A FUNDING REQUEST WITHIN THE EU. ITALY'S EU CORRESPONDENT IS ALSO ENGAGED. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) A/POLITICAL MINISTER-COUNSELOR AND POLOFF MET JULY 24 WITH CABRAS AND SEBASTIANO FULCI, MFA OFFICE DIRECTOR FOR WESTERN AFRICA. CABRAS -- WHO HAD ALREADY LEARNED FROM ITALY'S EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON THAT THE US HAS COMMITTED AN INITIAL 10 MILLION USD FOR ECOWAS SUPPORT -- AGREED ON THE NEED FOR EU SUPPORT OF AN ECOWAS MISSION IN LIBERIA AND SAID ITALY WOULD LEAD AN APPEAL FOR EU FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE. CABRAS NOTED THAT THERE HAS ALREADY BEEN A SERIES OF EU DISCUSSIONS ON FINANCING AN ECOWAS MISSION. ON USE OF AN ECOWAS TRUST FUND, CABRAS STRESSED THE NEED FOR DONORS TO BE ASSURED THAT FUNDS ARE USED APPROPRIATELY, AND SAID STANDARDIZED AND TRANSPARENT MECHANISMS WOULD BE NECESSARY TO EASE ANY CONCERNS ABOUT CORRUPTION AND TO ENCOURAGE DONORS' GENEROSITY.

[1](#)3. (C) CABRAS SAID THE EU'S PRIMARY FOCUS IS STILL ON REACHING A PEACE AGREEMENT. THE OUTLINES OF AN AGREEMENT ARE CLEAR AND ALREADY ON THE TABLE, BUT THE OPPOSING SIDES HAVE NOT YET REACHED CONSENSUS ON POWER SHARING AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF GOVERNMENT PORTFOLIOS. THE REBELS DEMAND PRESIDENT TAYLOR'S REMOVAL AND SEEK THE PRESIDENCY AND THE VICE-PRESIDENCY, WHILE THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT IS HOPING TO RETAIN THE PRESIDENCY AND SOME LEGITIMACY AS A DEMOCRATICALLY-ELECTED GOVERNMENT.

[1](#)4. (C) WE ALSO BRIEFED ITALY'S EU CORRESPONDENT, WHO CONFIRMED LATE ON 7/25 THAT ALL APPROPRIATE ELEMENTS IN BRUSSELS ARE ENGAGED. SEMBLER

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